

# INSPECTION REPORT

**FIDDLERS LANE COMMUNITY PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

Irlam, Salford

LEA area: Salford

Unique reference number: 105917

Headteacher: Mr M E Kirk

Reporting inspector: Mrs C E Waine  
23081

Dates of inspection: 26<sup>th</sup> February – 1<sup>st</sup> March 2001

Inspection number: 195469

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary with nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Fiddlers Lane Irlam
Postcode:	M44 6QE
Telephone number:	(0161) 775 2490
Fax number:	(0161) 775 2490
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr N Thomas
Date of previous inspection:	January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23081	Mrs C E Waine	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Religious education Equal opportunities	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
19958	Mr M Hammond	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20380	Mr N Pinkney	Team inspector	Science Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
22790	Mrs J Pinney	Team inspector	Provision for the children in the foundation stage Art and design Music	
20270	Mrs J Tracey	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology	
18926	Mr M Ridout	Team inspector	English Physical education Special educational needs English as an additional language	

The inspection contractor was:

PPI Group Ltd  
7 Hill Street  
Bristol  
BS1 5RW

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33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Fiddlers Lane Community Primary School serves a part of Irlam in which there are some areas with considerable social disadvantage. The school is larger than average, with 314 pupils on roll. About a third of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is above average. The school has 82 children attending full time in the foundation stage, 38 in the nursery and 44 in the reception year. The school is popular and has raised its admission number to cater for the many extra children who wish to attend. A new community room was built recently. There are only 10 children representing ethnic minority backgrounds and seven of these have English as an additional language, which is below average. Only two need significant support. There are 67 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, which is average. Their needs are mainly related to moderate learning difficulties and a few have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Five pupils (1.6 percent) have statements of their needs, which is average. When children enter the school, attainment is well below average, overall, as many children have poor communication and social skills.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Fiddlers Lane is effective in providing a good education for its pupils. Teaching is good throughout the school and enables pupils to achieve better standards than those in similar schools. The headteacher provides very strong leadership and is influential in promoting improvements. The school continues to give good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Pupils make good progress and achieve better than pupils in schools with similar backgrounds.
- Teaching is good and promotes good learning.
- The school benefits from strong leadership.
- The provision for the foundation stage<sup>1</sup> is good.
- The school cares for its pupils well and promotes good attitudes, values and behaviour.
- There are very good programmes of homework, swimming and activities outside lessons.
- Partnerships with parents and the community are very good.

#### **What could be improved**

- The way in which the school uses its assessment information to plan a good match of work for all pupils.
- The role of curriculum co-ordinators in checking the quality of pupils' learning.
- The progressive teaching of skills in several subjects.
- Opportunities to apply skills learned in independent research and investigation, particularly in science.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in January 1997 and, since that time, has made good improvement. In response to the key issues of that inspection the school has:

- raised standards in information and communication technology and provided better resources;
- increased resources for RE, which are adequate to support the teaching of world faiths;
- improved standards in music.

In addition the school has raised its standards gradually, at the end of both key stages, compiled a good range of assessment data to help check pupils' progress and set targets, extended the building to provide extra classrooms, play areas and a community room, extended its range of out-of-school activities, improved the provision for the children in the nursery and reception years and implemented a very good system of topic homework.

The school has the capacity and commitment to make further improvements.

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<sup>1</sup> The foundation stage is the provision for the children in the nursery and reception classes.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	D	C	E	B
Mathematics	D	D	D	B
Science	D	D	C	A

Key	
Well above average	A
Above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

The above results show that pupils left the school in 2000 with results that were well below the national average in English, below average in mathematics and average in science. However, in comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, results were above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. The results reflect good achievement for pupils, who entered the school with low levels of attainment. The school has improved its standards since the last inspection at a similar rate to the national trend. Boys and girls achieve at similar levels. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are rising in English and mathematics and most pupils in Year 6 are now working at the level expected for their age in all three subjects. Again, this represents good achievement for most pupils, although higher attainers are capable of more. The school has set appropriate targets for pupils aged 11 in English and mathematics and is successful in meeting them.

Children in the foundation stage make very good progress and, at age five, their attainment is similar to that expected for their age, although it is a little below that expected in early communication skills. In the results of national tests at age 7, in 2000, standards matched the national average in reading and writing and were below average in mathematics. In comparison with similar schools, standards were above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. Teacher assessments in science show attainment to be slightly below average. Inspection evidence shows that standards are similar to those of 2000, with some improvement in mathematics. There is little evidence of significant differences between boys and girls.

In information and communication technology, attainment is in line with the levels expected in the National Curriculum at ages 7 and 11 and pupils are increasingly using their skills to support work in other subjects. In most other subjects, standards are average at ages 7 and 11. In design and technology, attainment is average at age 7, but below average at age 11. Attainment in swimming is above average by age 11.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good, overall. Pupils have good attitudes in lessons and work hard. They are very enthusiastic about the opportunities they have out of class and take a full part in all aspects of school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good, overall. Pupils are well disciplined and most behave well at all times. There are a small number of pupils who find it difficult to conform, but they are usually very well managed.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils form positive relationships with staff and each other. Their personal development is good.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory and well below the national average. Unauthorised attendance is well above the national average.

The school makes every effort to encourage good attendance, but not all parents are co-operative in helping

to raise standards.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Satisfactory	Good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

Of the 71 lessons observed, teaching was at least satisfactory in 98 percent. It was good or better in 62 percent and it was very good in 11 percent. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed. Other evidence indicates that the standard of teaching is generally good throughout the whole school and contributes well to the progress made by pupils. In the one lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory, unsatisfactory behaviour by a few pupils was not managed as effectively as it might have been and this slowed the progress made by all pupils. Teaching in English and mathematics is good and literacy and numeracy skills are well taught. Teaching has improved since the last inspection in that there is a higher proportion of good teaching than at that time and it is more equally distributed across the school. Improvement has been promoted well by the way in which the school rigorously checks the quality of teaching and learning and takes effective action to improve. Teaching meets the needs of most pupils well, although higher attainers are capable of learning more.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good. It meets statutory requirements and is largely broad and balanced, with good attention to literacy and numeracy. The provision of activities outside lessons is very good and greatly enriches the work of the school. Swimming is a strength of the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good and pupils make good progress towards their personal targets.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good and these pupils soon become proficient in English and make similar progress to other pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good, overall. Provision for moral and social development is very good. Provision for cultural development is good and that for spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils well and provides a safe and secure environment. Assessment procedures are good, but the information gained could be better used to promote higher standards.

The way in which the school works with parents is a strength and parents value the school highly. They are encouraged to support their children at home and in school and are given very good guidance on how to do so. The way in which the curriculum is organised leads to a lack of attention to the progressive development of skills in some subjects, such as history. The school cares for its pupils well and monitors their personal development very well. There is a good range of assessment procedures that provide the school with substantial amounts of information about pupils' attainment and the progress that they make. This information could be better used in planning to improve achievement further.





## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school benefits from strong leadership by the headteacher and his senior management team. The role of curriculum co-ordinators in checking the quality of pupils' learning is underdeveloped.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body are well involved in the life of the school and fulfil their responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school undertakes a thorough review of its standards in national tests and compares these with national and local standards. Staff and governors have a clear view of strengths and know what needs to be improved.
The strategic use of resources	Accommodation and learning resources are well used in lessons and in out-of-hours clubs. Financial resources are efficiently used to support teaching and learning and to maintain class sizes under thirty.

As at the time of the last inspection, leadership and management are major factors in the school's success. Relationships are very good and the headteacher is very successful in creating a strong partnership between staff, governors and parents. All work closely together for the common good of the pupils and share a commitment to raising standards further. The school is good at checking that it gets best value for its money. There is a sound level of appropriately qualified staff. The accommodation is good, being spacious, attractive and well maintained. Resources are satisfactory, overall. They are good in information and communication technology, but unsatisfactory in design and technology.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children are happy at school.</li> <li>• Children are well taught and make good progress.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed and has high expectations of its pupils.</li> <li>• Children develop good attitudes and values and behaviour is good.</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents and they are kept well informed.</li> <li>• There is a good range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A small minority are concerned about the amount of homework, particularly for younger pupils.</li> </ul>

Parents are extremely supportive of the school and the inspection team fully supports their views. Several parents indicated some concern about the level of homework. Comments made on questionnaires and at the meeting indicated that the main concern was that there was too much homework for the younger children. The inspection team finds that the programme of homework is very good and that in practice younger pupils are not overloaded.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. At ages 7 and 11, most pupils are working at the level expected for their age, although only a small number work at a higher level. The introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is having a positive impact on raising standards, although this has not yet had a full effect on the standards at age 11. The school has focused on improving standards for lower attainers and has been successful in promoting good achievement for them and for the average attainers. This has raised standards at age 11 gradually. However, the progress of a small number of pupils who are potentially higher attainers, whilst satisfactory, is not as good as that of other pupils. The school has recognised this and has developed a policy to promote good progress for this group also. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make good progress, overall. The careful targeting of support in English in Year 2 is having a positive impact and most make good progress. These pupils achieve particularly well in Years 5 and 6, where they are targeted for additional teaching help for literacy and numeracy. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in the acquisition of English, integrate well and soon make similar progress to other pupils. During the inspection, there was no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls at ages 7 and 11.
2. When children enter the nursery at age three, overall standards are well below those expected for their age, particularly in social and communication skills. However, the provision of a pre-school group in the community room is having a beneficial effect and standards are beginning to rise. Children are taught well in the nursery and reception classes and make good progress. By the time they transfer to Year 1, most match the level expected nationally in personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world, mathematical, physical and creative development. In communication, language and literacy a significant group are not working at the levels expected, although, in reading, all make very good progress and match the levels expected for their age. The school has worked hard to establish good quality provision and this is now starting to be reflected in rising standards of attainment on transfer to Year 1.
3. In 2000, pupils' results in national tests for seven-year olds were average in reading and writing, but below average in mathematics. When compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, standards were above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. The results represented good achievement for most pupils, who entered Year 1 with below average levels of attainment. Whilst most pupils achieved well and attained the levels expected nationally, few attained the next higher level and this reflects some underachievement by higher attaining pupils. Standards in the tests in reading and writing have improved over time, with a bigger improvement noted in boys' reading and writing. This is a result of the school's successful focus on these areas, as they had been a cause for concern. There has been a steady decline in girls' attainment over time, but the school's investigations reveal that there is no particular reason, although the girls in each year group tend to be younger than the boys. There was a significant dip in mathematics in 1998, but standards in 2000 were similar to those of 1996. Inspection evidence shows that standards in reading and writing are similar to those in 2000. In mathematics, most pupils are now working at the levels expected for their age. In all three subjects, few pupils are working beyond the level expected and higher achievers could attain more. Teacher assessments in science, in 2000, showed that attainment was close to the average. Again, most pupils attained the level expected, but few exceeded it and this picture is also evident in current work.
4. Pupils' results in the national tests at age 11, in 2000, were well below the national average in English, below average in mathematics and average in science. When compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, standards in English and mathematics were above average and in science were well above average. The results represent at least satisfactory achievement by those pupils, overall, and good achievement in science. At age seven, in the national tests, the year group had attained well above average standards in reading and average standards in writing and mathematics, but there had been almost 30 per cent change in the group since that time, which affected the results considerably. Since 1996, results in English and science show improvement at a

rate that is broadly in line with the national trend of improvement. Results in mathematics are largely unchanged. In English and mathematics, whilst an average proportion of pupils attained the level expected for their age, few gained the next higher level. In science, the percentage of higher attainment was above the national average. Evidence from the inspection shows that there has been improvement in both English and mathematics and standards are rising. Attainment in writing was below that in reading and the school identified this as an area for development. Much support is given to lower attaining pupils and the focus on writing is beginning to have an impact. In science, most pupils work at the level expected but there was little evidence of pupils working at a higher level. Mathematics is also an area highlighted for development. There has been intensive monitoring to pinpoint areas for improvement and target groups of pupils for support. The school sets realistic targets for English and mathematics and is successful in achieving them.

5. In English, pupils' attainments are a little below average in speaking and listening at age 7, but are average at age 11. Not all pupils are careful listeners at age 7 and, whilst most are confident in speaking aloud, many have a narrow vocabulary. By age 11, pupils have made good progress because of the many opportunities provided for them to discuss and enrich their vocabulary. They listen carefully and are confident in speaking aloud to the group, using a satisfactory range of vocabulary. At age 7, most pupils attain the levels expected for their age in reading and writing. They make a good start on the school's reading scheme and most write in sentences, beginning to apply full stops and capital letters. Higher attainers do so with reasonable accuracy. Pupils build on this appropriately and, at age 11, attainment in English is average. Pupils develop confidence in using their skills in other subjects, although opportunities are somewhat limited. Topic homework is particularly effective in providing pupils with a chance to apply what they have learned in literacy lessons.
6. Attainment in mathematics is average at both 7 and 11. Pupils' numeracy skills have improved and are satisfactory, with a notable improvement in mental calculation. Pupils enjoy working out answers mentally and are developing the skills of explaining their methods. When given the chance, they use these skills satisfactorily in other lessons but again these opportunities are limited. Attainment in science is average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils make good progress through Years 1 and 2 in gaining knowledge and skills. It is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 as pupils have fewer opportunities to investigate and explore for themselves and this restricts the progress of higher attaining pupils in this aspect of work.
7. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are close to the levels expected at ages 7 and 11, which is an improvement on the previous inspection. Pupils make sound progress in other subjects, other than in design and technology in Years 3 to 6, where it is unsatisfactory. In swimming, pupils make good progress throughout the school and achievement is good. Standards in most subjects are in line with those expected at ages 7 and 11, except in design and technology at age 11, where pupils' making skills are unsatisfactory and in swimming where they are above average. The average standards noted in music are an improvement on those reported in the previous inspection.
8. Overall, there have been satisfactory improvements in the achievements of pupils and standards, particularly in English, mathematics and ICT are rising. Standards reflect good levels of achievement by most pupils from a low starting point. The good quality of teaching, the introduction of effective literacy and numeracy strategies and pupils' good attitudes to learning are all significant factors in this improvement. The impact of improved provision in the foundation stage is beginning to push up the level of attainment on entry to Year 1, which should have a beneficial effect on standards at age 7, in the future. The school sets appropriate targets for improvement in English and mathematics, based on assessment information and is successful in achieving them.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

9. Pupils' attitudes to school are good. Children in the foundation stage settle quickly into school routines. They enjoy their lessons and develop good attitudes to work. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are enthusiastic about school and most join in the range of interesting and varied activities with enjoyment. Almost all pupils listen carefully to their teachers and other adults and are eager to respond in discussion sessions. They settle quickly to their work and nearly always concentrate well

throughout the lesson. Pupils work well in activity sessions, often sharing ideas with each other before asking the teacher for help. Pupils of all ages have pride in their achievement and are keen to share their successes with others, such as in the weekly 'celebration assemblies'. Pupils with SEN and EAL are well-integrated into school life and have equally positive attitudes. They make substantial gains in self-confidence and social development as they move through school.

10. Behaviour is good and this confirms the views of most parents. There are a significant number of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties in some year groups, some of whom have experienced problems in other schools. The school works successfully in integrating these pupils, improving their behaviour and raising their self esteem. Staff have high expectations and the majority of pupils understand the boundaries that are set and respond well. Interesting lessons and good management of pupils sustain pupils' interest and contribute to the good learning environment. Occasionally, the challenging behaviour of a few pupils slows the pace of lessons and, hence, pupils' progress. Teachers usually handle such situations well and reduce the impact of anti-social behaviour on other pupils. There have been no permanent exclusions in the last 18 years and few for fixed terms. This reflects the school's philosophy of encouraging pupils to behave in a manner acceptable to others in the community.
11. Pupils mature as they progress through the school. By the time they reach Year 6, most are well-rounded and confident, with a caring instinct. They learn to express themselves clearly through good opportunities in religious education and circle time, when they share thoughts about caring, friendship and moral issues. These opportunities are effective in raising pupils' self-esteem and teaching them the importance of tolerance and respect for other people's views. A further contribution to pupils' personal development is the promotion of independent learning through the topic studies completed for homework. Pupils' choose their own topics and this has a significant bearing on the enthusiasm and initiative shown in researching for information. Greater opportunity for independent study could be built into lesson planning, as some lessons are tightly structured and do not allow sufficiently for this aspect. Pupils show respect for equipment and books; they are well trained to accept responsibility for themselves and to keep their classrooms and personal property in good order.
12. Attendance is well below the national average, with unauthorised absence being well above the national average. The figures do not reflect a true picture of the school where the majority of pupils are very keen to attend. The school has worked hard with the education welfare officer in introducing a comprehensive attendance action plan, to try to deal with the small number of pupils who are very poor attenders. Punctuality, both at the start of the day and in the lessons, is satisfactory.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

13. Teaching is good throughout the school and, in all but one of the 71 lessons observed, it was at least satisfactory. Teaching was good in 62 per cent of lessons and in 11 per cent it was very good. Teaching has improved since the last inspection in that there is a higher proportion of good teaching and it is more equally distributed across the school. Teaching was unsatisfactory in one lesson because of a lack of clear learning targets and the impact of the behaviour of some pupils. In lessons observed, teaching was good, overall, in the foundation stage and in Years 3 to 6 and was satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. However, other evidence indicates that good teaching is more equally distributed across the whole school and across most subjects. Teachers have effectively implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and are confident in teaching the basic skills needed for learning.
14. In the 3-5 Unit, the overall quality of teaching is good. In the lessons observed, 64 per cent of teaching was good, sometimes very good. Teachers give lively introductions to lessons and involve children well. Children enjoy these sessions and are keen to answer questions and say why they have given a certain answer. The teacher uses good strategies to teach reception children how to use their knowledge of letter sounds to build up words. For example, she uses sticky notes to cover up words and peels them back a letter at a time. Children are stimulated by this and make good progress in applying their phonic knowledge. Assessment information is used well to match tasks to children's needs and build on previous learning. All staff are aware of the needs of this age range and are particularly aware of the need to develop children's social and communication skills. They work effectively to this end and children quickly learn to relate to each other and to staff.

15. Teaching in Years 1 to 6 is good, overall, and occasionally very good. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and high expectations of pupils' ability to work hard and behave well. There are some challenging pupils in the school and teachers usually manage their behaviour very well, although a significant minority of pupils in Year 2 are slow to respond to the teacher's strategies, which sometimes slows the pace of learning. Staff apply the school's positive discipline policy in a calm manner, which minimises the effect of any misbehaviour and sets a good model for pupils. The good use of support staff with pupils with behaviour difficulties means that other pupils in the class do not have their work interrupted and can make good progress. This was observed in a Year 5 literacy lesson when a learning support assistant gave a pupil 'time-out'. Throughout the school, teachers have sound subject knowledge and use it well to plan interesting lessons that stimulate pupils to work hard. Teachers usually give clear instructions and tell pupils what it is that they are expected to learn. They involve pupils fully in lively introductory sessions and question them well to make them think about their work. Discussions are included in lessons and effectively extend pupils' speaking and listening skills and their social and moral development. For example, in circle time, Year 6 pupils discussed crime in the community and how they might take some responsibility in improving the situation.
16. Teachers' use of assessment varies. During lessons, teachers assess pupils' work and give them appropriate advice that extends their knowledge and skills. At the end of lessons, teachers make good use of time to assess what pupils have learned. Some make good notes to help them plan the next steps to build on pupils' previous learning. Other comments are related more closely to curriculum issues and although work is then planned to match to the next step in the curriculum, it does not always meet the needs of all pupils in the class. This means that lower attainers sometimes find work too hard and higher attainers are not sufficiently challenged. For example, in science investigations all pupils usually complete the same work at similar levels and higher attainers do not apply the good skills they learn in mathematics or ICT to extend their learning.
17. Although teaching is good, overall, there are some lessons where it is less effective. In these lessons time is not always used as well as it might be. For example, in one mathematics lesson the introduction was over-long and lower attaining pupils began to lose interest, as the work was too difficult for them. Eventually they settled to their tasks well and made satisfactory progress, overall.
18. Teaching for the pupils with SEN is good and teachers plan effectively to help them make good progress towards their personal targets. Teaching of pupils with EAL is good and helps them take a full part in lessons and make similar progress to other pupils.
19. Homework is well used throughout the school to reinforce and extend the work done in lessons. The programme builds appropriately through the school and the recent introduction of topic homework has been a great success and enables pupils to apply the skills they learn in lessons, particularly those in English and ICT. Pupils undertake one project of their choice each term and produce their own booklets or encyclopaedias on the topic. The quality of the work produced is of a good standard and reflects the personal commitment of pupils towards this type of work.
20. The good quality of teaching has a significant impact on the progress that pupils make as they move through the school.

## **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?**

21. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum in both key stages covering all subjects of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The time allocated to the teaching of English and mathematics is slightly more than is recommended to take account of the low literacy and numeracy skills of pupils on entry to the school. All pupils in the school have weekly swimming tuition. This is seen as a priority for pupils' health and safety in an area where there is easy access to numerous potential water hazards, such as the Manchester Ship Canal and the River Irwell. A full programme for pupils' personal, social and health education is in place and this is delivered through circle time.
22. All subjects now have policies that guide teachers' planning and this is an improvement since the

previous inspection. Current schemes of work, based on national schemes are progressively being implemented and are under regular review. Much of the curriculum is based on a two-year cycle of topics to take account of the mixed-age classes in the school. However, the timetabling arrangements for history, geography and design and technology present specific problems for the progressive development of skills in these subjects. Similarly, in science, in Years 3 to 6, the skills of independent investigation and observation are not developed progressively. The longish sessions for music and physical education are not always used efficiently, too much time being spent on changing for the latter lessons. All staff have had the necessary training in ICT and the skills taught in the computer suite are well used in some lessons, such as literacy and numeracy. There is to be a major initiative in extending this across the whole curriculum later in the spring term.

23. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and is in line with the national Code of Practice. Arrangements for identifying and supporting these pupils are very thorough. Target groups are identified in each class and support is particularly well focused in Year 2 and Year 6. Appropriately detailed individual education plans are provided for identified pupils. The better examples include well-defined and realistic targets for improvement, together with details of action to be followed for the next steps in learning. In some cases, the targets identified are not specific enough to guide teachers and parents. Insufficient account is sometimes taken of pupils' targets when planning work, especially in lessons where additional support is not available. Pupils with statements of educational need have appropriate support that is reviewed appropriately.
24. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is effective and pupils are well supported so that they have effective access to the full range of learning opportunities. Pupils who have received additional support in the past are now well integrated.
25. The school organises a very good range of educational visits and expert visitors to enrich its curriculum and enhance pupils' social and cultural development. Sports are well catered for and school teams achieve success; the lacrosse team recently won through to represent Salford schools in the North West regional championships. Qualified coaching is offered in lacrosse and rugby and activities are organised in soccer, netball, cross-country running, water sports and skipping. Other clubs include an after-school games club, music clubs and a computer club. Homework clubs are organised for pupils in Years 2, 5 and 6 and the school offers pre-school, after-school and holiday clubs for pupils. Children in the nursery and reception classes visit Worsley Woods and Manchester airport. Those in Years 3 and 4 develop compass skills through orienteering in Clifton Park and carry out river surveys in Worsley Woods. Visits to Manchester Museum and Chester are linked to studies of Ancient Egypt and Roman Britain and visits to the local library are used to view old documents and maps. Hikes are organised each year to the Peak District to include visits of historical interest, such as to the plague village of Eyam. Pupils in Year 5 have a week's residential visit to Lledr Hall in North Wales where there is a very good programme of activities based on history, geography, nature study and outdoor pursuits and an emphasis on relationships and team building.
26. The school has very good links with the community that enrich pupils' learning. For example, there are links with the local churches, Crucial Crew, fire brigade, community police, St John's Ambulance and an annual visit of the Health Bus. Very good contacts exist with the local high school and a number of higher education establishments. During the inspection, students on teacher training and work experience courses were seen actively involved in the school. The new community room is well used and there is a pre-school parent/toddlers group. Courses, such as ICT, are organised in the community room for parents and carers as well as the local community and this helps parents to help their children learn.
27. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development as they progress through the school. Spiritual development is promoted satisfactorily. The school provides an environment where all pupils are valued. Religious education makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development. For example, pupils learn to consider the feelings of others as they discuss what Mary might have been feeling as she walked to Bethlehem. Other areas of the curriculum are used appropriately to foster an awareness of the values and beliefs of others. For example, in studies of World War 2, pupils demonstrate sensitivity towards the suffering of Jews during The Holocaust. The school enjoys good links with local churches. However, school assemblies do not always fulfil statutory requirements for collective worship, in that there are insufficient opportunities for praise,

prayer or moments of peaceful but focused reflection.

28. The provision for moral development is very good and is a strength of the school. It is very strongly promoted through the caring ethos that is built upon mutual respect. It is summed up by the "three C's" of caring, co-operation and community that are depicted in the school logo. The quality of relationships, both between staff and pupils is very good and has a direct bearing on the good behaviour of pupils. All staff provide positive role models and work extremely well as a team, ensuring that discipline procedures are consistently applied. They understand the importance of raising self-esteem through reward rather than sanction. This is effectively reinforced by the daily selection of a "VIP" in each class and by awarding certificates which pupils are proud to receive during the good work assemblies. Staff work hard to ensure that pupils are considerate, tolerant of others and happy to help those in need. There are examples of when circle times are very well used to consider moral issues and encourage pupils to consider the needs of others, but there is some variation in quality of these sessions. Pupils' sense of morality develops as they go through the school and, in the upper school, it is clear that the majority are firmly aware of the difference between right and wrong and are willing to take responsibility for their actions.
29. The school makes very good provision for pupils' social development. The provision of a wide range of activities outside lessons is particularly effective in developing pupils' social skills, building confidence in relationships and instilling a sense of citizenship. The opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of responsibility increase as they go through the school. For example, three Year 6 pupils serve on the health and safety committee and report issues that concern pupils to the school governors. Pupils are encouraged to consider those who may not be as fortunate as themselves, as when a group of pupils used their initiative to raise money for the Comic Relief charity.
30. The provision for cultural development is good. Knowledge and understanding of pupils' own heritage are promoted well through history, geography, art and music. Very good use is made of visits to local areas of interest to enhance this awareness. The planned opportunities for pupils to appreciate the richness and diversity of other cultures have improved since the previous inspection and are satisfactory.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

31. The school provides a very happy, relaxed and stimulating environment and the friendliness and courtesy of the pupils and staff are strengths of the school. There is a very good range of policies and procedures that are applied consistently by all the staff, which effectively promote pupils' welfare. Relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils are very good and pupils are seen caring and supporting each other. Pupils gain in confidence as they progress through the school and as they do are more than willing to talk about themselves and their feelings and to ask for help when it is needed.
32. There are good links with pre-school providers and very good transfer arrangements that ensure that children settle well into school routines. Foundation stage staff know the children very well and provide a secure environment and encouragement, endeavouring to build each child's self-esteem. All staff have a caring attitude towards the pupils and, as a result, they achieve well. Pupils and their families are well known and this helps teachers monitor pupils' personal development. The provision of breakfast and after-school clubs is popular with both pupils and parents.
33. There is good support for pupils with SEN, including those with statements of their needs. The co-ordinator works closely with all staff to produce consistent and useful records. The school's rigorous and sensitive support for pupils is demonstrated through its well focused programme of monitoring undertaken by the co-ordinator and regular meetings with parents and other agencies, held to consider how pupils are getting on and to review provision.
34. The school is highly committed to a positive discipline and behaviour policy and it functions as an orderly and caring community. Parents are encouraged to contact the school should a problem arise and report that staff are more than willing to discuss any difficulties. They have full confidence in the school's ability to resolve any concerns. The school has a good child protection policy and staff understand their responsibilities in this area. Good arrangements are in place to deal with sick children.



35. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting children's' attendance, including an action plan to deal with the small number of pupils with poor attendance.
36. The governors regularly monitor health and safety, checking the site each term. Three Year 6 pupils were encouraged to survey the site and prepare a report on health and safety concerns. The report that they read to the governors was very well received. The pupils have been given a watching brief to see if their recommendations have been dealt with. A small number of safety concerns have been raised with the school.
37. Assessment procedures are good and this is a strength maintained since the previous inspection. The local education authority's assessment system is rigorously implemented at the beginning of the nursery and reception year and information gained is used effectively to move children's learning forward. Arrangements for the statutory tests and assessments at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with national procedures. As part of the school's strategy to raise standards, a well considered programme of annual tests in English and mathematics is implemented across other year groups. The tests are used to monitor progress in literacy and numeracy. The results are systematically collated and used to track pupils' progress through the school, although this work is not as sharply focused as it could be. Senior staff analyse the results to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance and make effective use of this information to focus initiatives such as 'reading recovery' 'additional literacy' and 'booster' groups. However, it is not yet used to identify higher attaining pupils and those who, with extra support, could reach a higher level. The information is also used well to set individual targets for pupils, although not all of these are as sharply focused as they could be. Assessment procedures in other subjects are variable, affecting science in particular. Teachers do not have enough information about the level of pupils' attainments to help them plan a good match of work for all.
38. There are established arrangements for teachers to exchange information about individual pupils at the end of each year and the information gained provides a sound basis for grouping pupils and focusing teaching. Further evidence of pupils' attainment and progress is contained in pupils' record of achievement files, but the assessments are not always linked to the samples of work retained. The school uses national materials to guide teachers in making assessments and a start has been made on compiling subject collections of assessed work to help them further.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

39. The partnership between parents and the school is very good and is a strength of the school, as it was at the time of the last inspection. The school has built successfully on its partnership with parents since that time. Parents report that this is a very good school where all the staff care deeply for their children. Many said how much they appreciated being part of the school with so many opportunities open to them to become involved in school life. The impact of their involvement with the school is very good. A large number act as volunteers in the school, working closely with the teachers. During the inspection, many were observed working with small groups of pupils and helping in many practical ways. For example, they prepare fruit for pupils during breaktime. Support for the weekly celebration school assembly is good. Parents and carers are also involved with the Parents and Teachers Association, organising social events and much-appreciated fund-raising for the school.
40. The quality of information given to parents is very good. Parents receive a weekly newsletter and are kept informed of their children's progress through a consultative week each term and a good annual written report. The sharing of targets with parents and the guidance given to help them to support their children in achieving these targets is very productive. The use of home-school reading diaries is strongly supported and is used well by parents and teachers to comment on children's progress.
41. Support for children with SEN is good and parents are fully involved. They are kept well informed of their children's progress. At the meeting with parents held prior to the inspection and when interviewed during the week of the inspection, they all spoke highly of the quality of relationships between themselves and the staff and expressed appreciation of their approachability and openness.
42. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is good. The majority support the homework policy, particularly that based on topic work. Many said how enthusiastic their children

had become, including some who had been reluctant learners. One or two parents expressed concern that there was too much homework for the younger children but, in practice, they have a similar amount to pupils of similar age in other schools. Parents appreciate the way in which the school brochure detailed ways in which they can help their children with their learning. Many parents take part in courses provided by the school in the new community room, including a current course on basic ICT. Effective procedures are in place for considering parents' views and keeping them informed about the curriculum.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. As at the time of the previous inspection, the leadership of the headteacher is a major factor in the school's success. He is highly committed to improvement for the school and in order to improve provision has developed a very effective system of checking the quality of teaching and learning. There is rigorous and effective professional dialogue about teaching methods and the effective action taken has been successful in maintaining a good quality of teaching over time. He is well supported in this work by the senior management team. Together they have recently developed the system further into a highly concentrated approach, focusing their efforts on one subject at a time and involving the subject co-ordinator and local education authority advisers. The findings of the recent focus on numeracy have highlighted specific points for improvement, which now form the basis for an action plan to further raise standards in mathematics.
44. Relationships are very good and the staff work as a united team, sharing the headteacher's commitment to improving pupils' achievements in their work and in their personal development. The school's aims are clearly reflected throughout its work and a good learning environment is created. Subject co-ordinators are influential in planning the provision for their subjects and ensuring that teachers plan for full coverage of the National Curriculum. Each has a good awareness of how provision needs to develop further, but they do not all systematically check the quality of pupils' work throughout the school. This means that some do not have a full overview of how effective teachers' plans are in promoting good achievement for all pupils.
45. The provision for pupils with SEN is well managed. The additional funding for pupils with SEN is effectively targeted. The recently appointed co-ordinator has conducted a thorough audit of arrangements. A suitable programme of monitoring is in place to evaluate the quality of provision. Whilst this is a valuable initiative, some opportunities are missed for the co-ordinator to contribute to the teaching programme and develop further strategies for intervention.
46. The governing body has a good partnership with the staff and parents and governors play an increasing role in the school's commitment to improvement. Link governors meet regularly with subject co-ordinators and feed back information to the full governing body, which helps provide a good overview of provision. They are closely involved with the school's target setting procedures and compare standards carefully with those of other schools, understanding its strengths and knowing what it needs to do to improve. Their good level of information supports them in planning for school development. The school development plan is a clear and useful document and financial resources, including specific grants, are very well used to improve provision for the identified priorities. The school has cleared its small financial deficit and now has plans to maintain a small reserve of money for emergencies. Governors and staff are good at checking that the school gets best value for its money. Organisational and financial procedures are correct and are efficiently handled by the administrative staff. The school makes sound use of information and communication technology both in classrooms and in administrative procedures and has outline plans to extend its use into the recording of assessment information.
47. There is a satisfactory number of appropriately qualified staff and arrangements to inform and support new staff are good. Accommodation is very good and maintained to a high standard internally, although some exterior paintwork is in need of attention. Since the last inspection, the school has been extended to cater for extra numbers. In addition, a new community room has been built and the outside play area for the younger children covered over, both of which considerably enhance the educational provision of the school. The community room also provides for good facilities for the Breakfast Club, after-school club and holiday clubs. There is ample playground space and a large playing field, together with a stimulating open outdoor environment for the foundation stage children.
48. There is a satisfactory level of resources, which are well organised and used effectively. The computer room is well used throughout the whole day and also by after-school clubs.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards further the school should:

- (1) improve its use of assessment information to provide a good match of work for all pupils so that all make the progress of which they are capable;

(paragraphs 1, 3, 4, 16, 23, 37, 68, 75, 77, 80, 87, 89)

- (2) implement a framework for the progressive teaching of skills in all subjects;

(paragraphs 22, 89, 100, 107, 112)

- (3) provide more opportunities within lessons for pupils to work on independent investigation and research; and

(paragraphs 22, 86, 88)

- (4) further develop the role of curriculum co-ordinators so that they all have a clear overview of standards in their subjects.

(paragraphs 44, 90, 101, 118, 134)

In addition there are a number of minor issues that the governors may wish to include in their action plan (paragraphs 12, 23, 27, 36):

- attendance is well below average;
- acts of collective worship do not meet statutory requirements;
- there are a number of minor health and safety issues; and
- targets for pupils with special educational needs are not always specific enough.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	71
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	49

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	11	52	35	2	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	38	276
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	103

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR- Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	47
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	11	5

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	30
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.0
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	22	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	21	22
	Girls	20	17	20
	Total	41	38	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (88)	84 (83)	93 (90)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	21	21
	Girls	18	21	21
	Total	39	42	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (83)	93 (90)	93 (80)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	21	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	13	16
	Girls	12	12	13
	Total	25	25	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (70)	68 (66)	78 (61)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	12	16
	Girls	12	11	12
	Total	23	23	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	62 (68)	62 (85)	76 (61)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	5
White	304
Any other minority ethnic group	6

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	3	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR - Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.5
Average class size	21.3

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	222

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	55

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9.5
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	569655
Total expenditure	583833
Expenditure per pupil	1807
Balance brought forward from previous year	11034
Balance carried forward to next year	-3144

**Results of the survey of parents and carers**

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out

314
69

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	32	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	41	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	42	6	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	46	10	3	0
The teaching is good.	62	36	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	37	3	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	28	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	25	0	3	0
The school works closely with parents.	57	32	7	3	1
The school is well led and managed.	62	32	6	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	64	32	4	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	70	28	1	0	1



## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

49. Provision for children in the foundation stage is good and is a strength of the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection and reflects the strong commitment by the school to this group of pupils. On entry to the nursery, attainment is variable but, overall, it is usually well below average as a significant number of children have poor skills in spoken language and social development. A pre-school playgroup has been established in the school's new community room and this is now raising the level of attainment on entry to the nursery. Whilst overall attainment has improved, in the important area of communication many are still well below average. Children spend a year in the nursery before transferring to one of the reception classes at the beginning of the academic year in which they are five. The assessments made on entry to the reception classes, in 2000, indicate that attainment is above average in comparison with other children in the local education authority, but, in comparison with national expectations, standards are below average.
50. Children make good progress in all areas of learning. Those children with SEN or with English as an additional language are well supported and also make good progress. For example, in music, a child who was visually impaired was thrilled as he was given the opportunity at the end of the lesson to feel the electric keyboard and to play a few notes by himself. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1, most children have achieved the levels expected in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. In communication, language and literacy, despite the good progress that is made, attainment remains below the levels expected at that age.
51. The quality of teaching is good. In lessons observed, it was never less than satisfactory and was mostly good. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum recommended for children of this age and plan a wide range of stimulating activities. Effective planning has a positive impact on children's learning and attitudes to school. A calm and purposeful working environment is created and this promotes effective learning. There is very good teamwork between all members of staff and the good quality of teaching is successfully raising standards when pupils enter Year 1.
52. The provision is well managed and resources are good. The accommodation is good, particularly the secure outdoor areas, which include a large sheltered area to cater for year-round outdoor play.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

53. Many children enter the nursery with poorly developed social skills. During the inspection, a significant minority of children demonstrated skills that were well below average, having limited powers of concentration and playing in isolation, rather than relating to others. However, progress is good and most children become used to class routines and establish positive relationships with each other and with adults. They begin to tidy up after themselves and wash their hands before cooking and after painting. In the reception class, children dress and undress themselves for physical education or outdoor play. They confidently make their own choice of activity and persevere until it is completed. Most are happy with daily routines and are willing to explore and to try new activities.
54. Staff provide well for children's personal development by giving useful opportunities to develop independence. For example, resources are well organised so that children can help themselves to implements such as pencils and glue spreaders. Children's opinions are listened to and valued. Very effective measures have been established to support children on entry to the school. There are home visits from teachers and nursery nurses, before starting in the nursery, which helps children to form positive relationships with staff from an early stage. Parents are appreciative of the strong links that are forged between home and school. Teachers and support staff work together most effectively as a team to create a stimulating and peaceful environment and children are happy to come to school.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

55. At the time of the inspection, about a quarter of the children in the nursery had been referred for speech therapy and raising the standard of speaking and listening is a high priority. Adults talk constantly with the children, effectively developing their ability to express themselves. In the nursery, children begin to listen and respond appropriately, but a significant minority lack confidence, responding only with single words. When they leave the reception class most children express their needs satisfactorily, but their range of vocabulary is below average.
56. Relevant elements of the national literacy framework are used well in the reception class. Children make very good progress in the development of reading skills and inspection evidence indicates that standards are above average. Understanding of initial sounds and familiar words is reinforced through rhymes and stories. Children enjoy listening to stories and readily share books with adults. For example, three higher attaining children in the nursery were observed joining in with telling a familiar story. They turned the pages of the book carefully and used pictures to help them recall the text, which they remembered very well. Most children in the reception classes make a good start on the school's reading scheme. They understand that words convey meaning and that print is read from left to right. They read a few familiar words and demonstrate understanding by explaining the story in simple terms. Higher attaining pupils confidently identify many commonly used words and use their knowledge of letters to help them read those that they do not know. The daily practice of reading in small groups with adult support contributes directly to the very good progress that is made in reading.
57. Staff encourage children to think of themselves as writers and provide good opportunities for them to write independently. For example, all classes have writing tables with supplies of pencils and crayons. Children enjoy mark making but, although they make good progress, standards are below average. Whilst most children write individual letters, few write familiar words accurately and attainment is below average. The foundation stage co-ordinator has identified this as an area for development.
58. Teaching is good. Teachers assess children regularly and set individual targets to help each to make good progress. They involve parents well, encouraging them to help their children. For example, in the reception classes, parents are encouraged to remain with the children each morning and assist them in completing a simple writing pattern. Parents and children enjoy this relaxed start to the day and it is having a positive impact on learning. Children are encouraged in their reading development by taking books home to share with their parents.

## **Mathematical development**

59. Teaching is good and promotes good progress. By the end of the foundation stage, most children achieve the expected standards. Nursery children show an interest in counting as they join in number rhymes. In the reception classes, most children correctly match items to given numbers, order numbers to ten and count one more or one less in simple practical calculations. Higher attaining children begin simple addition. Children become aware of the patterns in numbers as, for example, they use cubes to build towers of one to ten that they place in order in a "staircase" pattern for teddy to climb. Cooking activities are used well to provide experience of estimating, counting and weighing.
60. Teachers provide frequent opportunities to sort, match, order and count and mathematical skills are effectively developed through singing rhymes and counting games. Activities are imaginative and children are enthusiastic in their learning. This was evident in the nursery where individual children eagerly carried out a survey of favourite milkshakes. They confidently circled the room, asking other children for their preference, recording answers by making a mark on a chart. There are regular mental mathematics sessions that promote good progress. Questions are well directed to children's individual needs. In number activities, children are well supported by adults who regularly assess children's progress and improve it by reinforcing mathematical vocabulary. This was evident when the children who were building staircases were asked if they needed one "more" or one "less" cube.

## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

61. Children make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world through many well-

planned activities, which are usually linked to a topic or theme. During the inspection, activities were linked to the topic of change. As children made pancakes to celebrate Shrove Tuesday they learned how ingredients change when heated. In the nursery, children learn the difference between "hot" and "cold" and observe how balloons filled with water become solid when frozen. Children show developing skill when cutting or sticking or when using construction apparatus to make recognisable models. Reception children use the computer mouse effectively to change the size and colour of animals. Children develop an understanding of the wider environment through regular visits into the community, such as to a local farm. At the end of the reception year, children achieve the level expected in this area of learning.

62. Teaching is good and teachers provide a wide range of materials and experiences. Staff have very good relationships with the children. Children are listened to and valued and are managed well. As with other areas of learning, support staff make an important contribution to the good progress that is made. This was evident in the nursery when a member of the support staff gave the class turns to feel and describe a balloon that had been filled with water and frozen. This session was extremely well led and children were totally enthralled as the adult peeled the balloon away to reveal the frozen water inside. They made very good progress in their learning because questions were tailored well to their individual needs.

### **Physical development**

63. The secure covered and open outdoor play areas give children good opportunities to develop their physical skills. Co-ordination develops effectively as children use sit and ride toys and climbing equipment. In physical education lessons in the hall, good adult support sensitively encourages all children to participate fully. Praise is used well to encourage children and good performance by individuals is used effectively as an example to the rest of the class. Reception children show an awareness of space as they move around the hall in response to teachers' instructions. They demonstrate satisfactory co-ordination and balance as they hop, skip and jump and use their bodies to make large and small shapes.
64. In the nursery, fine motor skills, such as handling scissors are below average. However, children are provided with good resources and plenty of opportunity to develop these skills so that they make good progress. By the end of the reception, children have achieved satisfactory standards.

### **Creative development**

65. At the end of the reception year, children attain standards that match those expected for their age. They demonstrate increasing competence with a range of media and materials. In the nursery, they develop an awareness of colour such as when they paint self-portraits. They make good progress in their use of colour. For example, reception year children mix their own powder paints to paint the squares on "Elmer the Elephant" and higher attaining children explain that when blue and yellow are mixed together they produce green. Children print colourful patterns linked to their work in mathematics. In the nursery and reception classes, children develop independence in selecting both the tools and techniques they use to assemble and join different materials. In music, they sing in tuneful accompaniment to the keyboard. As they clap and rub their hands in response to changes in tempo, children become aware of "long" and "short" sounds.
66. Overall, good teaching provides for a wide range of experiences. Teachers plan stimulating activities and provide good resources to motivate children to improve their skills. Children are well managed and respond well to adults' instructions.

## **ENGLISH**

67. At ages 7 and 11, most pupils are working at the level expected for their age. Standards at age 7 have risen slightly since the previous inspection, more so in writing than in reading. At age 11, they have risen steadily. The rising trend in both sets of results is similar to the national trend. The school has been successful in raising standards for lower attaining pupils by the provision of extra support. Whilst most pupils achieve well, making good progress from their starting point, higher attaining pupils could achieve more and the school has recognised this as a priority for future development.

68. In the results of the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000, attainment in reading and writing was average, overall, with most attaining the level expected for their age. Few exceeded this level. In comparison with similar schools, attainment in both areas was above average. Boys' attainment was slightly better than that of girls and has improved faster because of a successful focus on boys' reading, which had been a cause of concern. Evidence from lessons observed and from examination of work indicates that most pupils are working at similar levels to those indicated by the assessments, which represents good achievement in the light of their attainment on entry to Year 1.
69. At age 11, the test results, in 2000, showed standards to be well below the national average, although in comparison with similar schools, standards were above average. This was a good achievement for this year group as almost 30 percent joined the school during Years 3 to 6. The performance of boys and girls was broadly similar. Current evidence shows that, overall, standards have risen in that the school's focus on lower attainers and on raising standards in writing has been successful in improving the proportion of pupils who work at the level expected for their age. There is still little improvement in the level of higher attainment.
70. At age 7, attainment in speaking and listening is a little below average. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in listening carefully, but a significant minority of pupils in Year 2 have difficulty in following instructions and listening respectfully to each other's responses. Attainment in speaking is variable. For example, Year 2 pupils spoke their lines confidently to a large audience in an assembly, but some lacked confidence in class when using new vocabulary to identify examples of rhyming pairs and alliteration in poems. Many demonstrate a limited vocabulary when attempting to communicate their thoughts and feelings. At age eleven, attainment in speaking and listening is average. Pupils listen with concentration to other pupils and their teachers and wait their turn to contribute in discussions. Most are confident in putting forward their point of view in discussion, although some speak quietly and with hesitation. This was evident when they discussed ideas for rhymes enthusiastically before writing limericks. Some used the terms homophone and synonym accurately, but others lacked a sufficiently wide vocabulary to help them explain their ideas clearly. Pupils benefit from opportunities for speaking and listening during the literacy hour, when teachers take every opportunity to widen pupils' vocabulary and extend their understanding of the use of language.
71. At age 7, attainment in reading is average, with most pupils working at the level expected. They make satisfactory progress in acquiring a sound range of reading skills. They read with developing accuracy and respond with interest to what they have read. Higher attaining pupils understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction books and gain confidence in locating information. Pupils use a sound range of strategies in attempting new words, For example, they use their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make to build the whole word. Higher attainers successfully use the sense of the surrounding text they are reading to help them read unfamiliar words. Pupils' skills are developed satisfactorily during literacy lessons and suitable use is made of the shared and guided reading time to help pupils gain a greater understanding of what they read. Pupils take books home on a regular basis and parents contribute well to the progress their children make. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6 and at age 11, attainment is average. They enjoy books and respond to the humour and subject matter with interest. Many find it more difficult to express opinions about plot and character. Higher attaining pupils explain the reasons for their views about books by referring to the appropriate pages. Some pupils' knowledge of a range of authors is limited, although work in the literacy hour, especially in Years 5 and 6, is having a positive impact on enriching the range of literature studied. Pupils use books and computers to find information in other subjects and their library and research skills are developing particularly well. They are particularly well applied in homework, when pupils compile individual books on topics of their choice.
72. In writing, at age 7, most pupils work at the level expected for their age, but a lower than average proportion are working at the next higher level. This reflects a measure of underachievement for some potentially higher attaining pupils. Pupils use writing frames well to organise and plan extended stories and accounts for a range of purposes. The majority spell a range of familiar words accurately, although their choice of vocabulary is limited and few use words adventurously. Higher attainers use interesting vocabulary and express their ideas clearly in well-organised and structured sentences. Spelling is mostly consistent and handwriting is accurately formed print of a consistent size. Sentences are sometimes punctuated with capital letters, commas and full stops, but the amount of

writing is often limited. Higher attaining pupils apply punctuation accurately and consistently and many use interesting sentence connectives. Lower attaining pupils successfully communicate meaning through simple words and phrases. Their letters are appropriately formed, but writing is usually large. Pupils apply their writing skills satisfactorily in other subjects, such as religious education. Overall, standards are beginning to improve as the school's focus on writing takes effect. At age 11, most pupils work at the level expected for their age. Pupils know that writing is used for a range of purposes and the writing of many is varied and interesting, including both stories and factual writing. Punctuation and sentence construction are satisfactory. Higher attaining pupils use punctuation, including speech marks, well and sentences are generally well structured with the effective use of some extended phrases. Ideas are developed logically and organised into paragraphs. In their topic homework, most organise their books into paragraphs and chapters. Most pupils write neatly and present work well, but there is too little evidence of drafting to improve the quality of work. The literacy hour is having a positive effect on pupils' ability to select more powerful language and pupils have suitable opportunities to write for a range of purposes. However, because of the limited time available the quantity is sometimes brief. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills across the curriculum. The school has recognised this shortcoming and is beginning to address the problem, such as by developing a piece of writing over several days. This is having a positive impact with older pupils whose independent writing is carefully and neatly presented and shows fluency of style.

73. Pupils with SEN make good progress overall and particularly in the juniors. They frequently benefit from good support given by learning support assistants in small groups. The few pupils for whom English is an additional language also make good progress. They have targeted support that quickly enables them to take a full part in lessons. Several pupils no longer require specific support and maintain similar progress to others.
74. Teaching is good. In lessons observed during the inspection, it was satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors, where it was good in three-fifths of lessons. However, other evidence indicates that teaching is generally good in both key stages. Teachers' have sound subject knowledge and plan their lessons well, providing good learning opportunities for pupils to progressively build on their skills. They make satisfactory use of computers in literacy lessons. In the most effective lessons teachers have high expectations and engage pupils' interest by setting a brisk pace and providing appropriately challenging work. Pupils are motivated to give of their best and effective questioning is used well to enhance and extend pupils' thinking. Teaching is less successful when insufficient use is made of on-going assessment, to match work well to pupils' needs. Tasks are not always made as clear as they could be and this slows the pace of learning. When pupils are not clear what is expected of them, they lose interest and show a lack of urgency in completing their tasks. Pupils' positive attitudes generally contribute to their quality of learning, but the impact of good teaching skills is sometimes reduced in Year 2 by the immature behaviour of a significant minority of pupils, who slow the pace of the lesson. Across the school, learning support assistants provide knowledgeable and useful help. Most pupils work hard in their independent sessions during the literacy hour, which contributes positively to their personal development. They co-operate and support each other well.
75. The co-ordinator has worked effectively to promote literacy and improve standards. She checks teachers' planning regularly and the monitoring of teaching and learning in lessons by senior managers is an established and effective feature. The school has set realistic targets for the national tests for 2001, based on sound evidence. Resources are adequate, with a suitable variety of reading materials to stimulate pupils' interests and meet their needs in all subjects. However, some well-used books are in need of replacement. Although there is no separate library, good efforts are made to ensure that books are accessible in classrooms and the corridors where most reference books are displayed. Extra books are borrowed from the library service to extend the provision of interesting reading material and special information for class topics.

## **MATHEMATICS**

76. Standards of work are improving and, at ages 7 and 11, most pupils attain the levels expected for their age. Boys and girls achieve similar standards. Pupils' numeracy skills are average and improving. They achieve well from their starting points because of rigorous teaching that is firmly based on the National Numeracy Strategy. Standards have risen since the previous inspection, particularly in

respect of the attainment of lower-attaining pupils. Whilst these pupils achieve well, higher attaining pupils could achieve more.

77. In 2000, results in the national tests for 7 year-olds were below the national average, but matched those for similar schools. An average proportion of pupils achieved the level expected for their age, but the proportion attaining the next higher level was below average. The upward trend in performance in recent years has kept pace with the national trend. Current work indicates an improvement on these standards, although the level of higher attainment is still below average. In Years 1 and 2, teachers build up pupils' confidence in the application of number skills through the use of a wide variety of stimulating materials and techniques. They are quick to recognise when pupils do not understand and use alternative strategies to assist learning, such as using dice to consolidate pupils' understanding of number bonds to 10. By the end of Year 1, most pupils extend this to numbers to 20 and many work beyond these. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of shape, space and measure. They handle and interpret data and make reasoned judgements from pictorial data. The use of computer skills is integral to all the work. A good example was the colourful bar graph, produced independently by a pupil, showing the distribution of colours of sweets in several tubes. Teachers promote good practice by encouraging pupils to cross check their work for accuracy.
78. Results in the 2000 national tests for 11 year-olds were below the national average, but were above average compared to similar schools. This is creditable, considering that 30 percent of the year group did not join the school at the normal starting time. Steady improvement in results over the past three years has kept pace with the national trend. Analyses of previous results and prior attainment are being used to set targets for attainment when pupils leave school in Year 6. Targets for previous years have not been as sharp as they are now; the current ones are realistic and challenging.
79. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 did not benefit from the National Numeracy Strategy in their earlier years. The school has identified some gaps in their learning and is filling these at the same time as consolidating number skills. The introduction of a brisk mental session at the start of each lesson is effective in focusing attention on the many different ways of dealing with numerical operations. Throughout the school, a strong emphasis is placed on the correct use of mathematical terminology and this also contributes well to the development of literacy skills. Teachers incorporate word problems into activity sessions, so that pupils are provided with numerous opportunities to translate words to numerical operations. Where relevant, teachers base work on practical activities that give pupils confidence to move on to a more theoretical approach. Good provision is made for pupils to join in discussion with teachers – this enables them to explain the reasoning underpinning their work and to correct misconceptions. The school has successfully focused attention on improving the attainment of lower-attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs. These pupils make good progress from their starting points. Learning assistants and trained voluntary helpers satisfactorily support them, such as through the recently introduced Mathematics Recovery programme. Whilst lower attainers have been well supported, the school's bank of assessment data has not been used to identify and support potentially higher attaining pupils, but good plans are now in hand to provide additional support for those in Year 6. Numeracy skills are average and are used satisfactorily in mathematics lessons. Satisfactory links with mathematics occur in geography and information technology, but there is little evidence of the use of number, measuring and data handling in scientific investigations and opportunities are being missed to apply and develop these mathematical skills.
80. Teaching is good, overall, throughout the school. It was good in 6 of the 9 lessons observed and satisfactory in the others. Similar proportions of good teaching were seen in each of the key stages. The quality of teaching contributes significantly to pupils' learning and the improving standards. The well-balanced, three-part lessons are providing good opportunities for pupils to gain and extend knowledge, practise new skills and share ideas. These lessons promote interest and pupils concentrate well on their tasks. Good lessons include purposeful use of time and work well matched to pupils' needs. This was evident in the Year 3 lesson in which pupils experimented with number patterns, the higher-attaining pupils working on an 8 by 8 grid of numbers. Pupils were shrewd in their perception of the differences between the emerging patterns and those on the 10 by 10 grids. Pupils' use of an overhead projector was very effective in demonstrating visibly to each other how compound shapes can be broken down into shapes of known area. Where lessons were satisfactory rather than good the whole-class sessions were too long, especially for the lower-attaining pupils who lost

concentration when the work became too complicated for them. They would have gained more by practising for themselves on simple exercises well matched to their needs.

81. The school has identified mathematics as a target area for further improvement and has recently carried out an intensive monitoring of teaching and pupils' learning. This has been effective in focusing attention on specific areas for development. Of particular significance is the plan to identify those pupils who, with a little extra support, could achieve higher standards. The school has the will and capacity for further improvement.

## **SCIENCE**

82. At ages 7 and 11, pupils work at levels broadly in line with those expected for their ages. Standards in the school have improved steadily since the last inspection, but at a slower rate than the national trend.
83. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Assessment by teachers at age 7, in 2000, showed that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level of attainment was broadly in line with the national average, but few pupils reached the next higher level. In the national tests for pupils at age 11, in 2000, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level was close to the national average and the percentage reaching the next higher level was above the national average. The results were better than those in both English and mathematics and were well above the average in similar schools. Pupils, including those with SEN make satisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6.
84. At age 7, pupils have sound knowledge and understanding of the topics covered in their lessons. They name the major parts of their body and recognise the five senses. They handle different materials, such as paper, wood, plastic and glass, recognise their different properties and understand how these are linked to their usage in common household objects. They recognise forces as pushes or pulls and that some materials are magnetic, whilst others are not. Pupils make a sound start in carrying out investigative work, such as plotting the position of the sun at different times of the day from a fixed point and observing the formation of shadows. They set up fair tests, for example to compare the relative strengths of different magnets by measuring the distance at which they pick up a small nail.
85. At age 11, pupils have a deeper scientific understanding. They know that the properties of solids, liquids and gases reflect the spacing of the particles making up the materials. They recognise that some changes are reversible and that energy is involved in these changes. Higher attaining pupils use the simple particle model of matter to explain these changes. Pupils have good understanding of electrical circuits and construct simple electromagnets. However, they do not develop skills in planning and carrying out investigations to a satisfactory level. They recognise how to set up a fair test, but they do not systematically measure quantities such as length, mass, time, volume, etc. and conclusions are frequently based on qualitative judgements. For example, they say, "it goes further", rather than actually measuring the distance an object travels. Skills in recording data, checking them for reliability and presenting them in suitable graphical forms are under-developed. Computers are underused in this work, although a very good example of how they can be used was seen in the Year 3 and 4 class, when pupils collected data on soil samples and produced a graph to show their distribution on a computer.
86. Lower attaining pupils and those with SEN are given suitably modified tasks and worksheets to enable them to take a full part in lessons. They have good support and encouragement from teachers and support staff and make good progress through the school. Higher attaining pupils are not consistently challenged and do not achieve as much as they could.
87. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good. Lessons are well planned and have clear learning targets, which are shared with pupils at the start of lessons and carefully reviewed at the end. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally satisfactory, although, occasionally, there is some hesitancy in answering searching questions from pupils, such as whether putty or a sponge are solids. Teachers have realistic expectations of pupils and plan a range of activities to challenge most of them. For example, pupils in Year 3 set up a fair test to compare how quickly water percolated through different soil samples. Pupils had to share the work within their groups and organise the

taking of a series of measurements. Higher attaining pupils could be better challenged by the provision of more opportunities for independent investigations. Teachers use clear questions well to assess pupils' knowledge and progress and encourage them to practise their speaking skills by developing their answers. Key words are identified in many lessons and emphasis is placed on their correct usage in speaking and in written work.

88. Curriculum planning is satisfactory. Topics are planned on a two-year cycle to ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study. The scheme of work is being reviewed to assess its effectiveness to meet the needs of all pupils. The integration of investigative skills, particularly in Years 3 to 6, is not yet clearly planned and particularly limits the progress of higher attaining pupils. Procedures for the assessment and monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress are under-developed. Much of the assessment is based on teachers' judgements of pupils' individual progress in lessons and standardised test materials are not used systematically throughout the school. Insufficient use is made of assessment information to set targets for individual pupils or the subject as a whole, but this is a planned development for the next school year.
89. The co-ordinator ensures coverage of the full curriculum by checking teachers' plans. The subject has taken a backseat in terms of development during the introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies. The co-ordinator has not yet checked whether these plans are effective in promoting good achievement for all pupils by systematically examining pupils' work. The subject has been identified as development priority in the next year.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

90. As at the time of the previous inspection, pupils aged 7 and 11 work at the levels expected for their age by the National Curriculum.
91. At age seven, pupils express themselves confidently in a range of media, including crayon, pencil, paint and collage. Observational drawings are detailed and pencils are used well to create line. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, a higher attaining pupil demonstrated very good use of techniques to produce an excellent drawing of a pineapple. Pupils show satisfactory use of colour as they mix different shades for a sunset background to silhouettes, as part of their work on shadows.
92. At age 11, pupils' painting skills exceed expectations as they use techniques such as stippling and overlay confidently to produce effective landscape paintings. Their observational drawings are detailed and demonstrate a developing use of perspective to add depth to their work. Their work with clay, such as making coil and thumb pots, shows sound attention to detail and sound use of techniques.
93. A strong feature of pupils' work throughout the school is their exploration of the styles of well-known artists. This is linked well to the development of artistic skills and enhances progress for all pupils. For example, pupils in Year 2 look at self-portraits of famous artists before using a variety of colours to mix paints and create a textured effect in their own. Some use pastels to add detail. In Year 4, pupils look at the different facial expressions used by Andy Warhol, before producing their own collage of block prints of different facial expressions. However, apart from the work in clay, there are few examples of pupils working in three dimensions, which limits progress in this important area. At present, there is insufficient use of information technology to generate ideas and to produce art images. Throughout the school, pupils use sketchbooks effectively to plan their work and try out techniques. This also provides a good record of their progress.
94. In the lessons observed during the inspection, the quality of teaching was mostly good and in one lesson it was very good. In this lesson, the teacher demonstrated good subject knowledge and the lesson was very well planned. Very good use was made of resources and, before pupils made their own containers from clay, they were given the opportunity to examine a wide variety of ceramic containers and evaluate them for their effectiveness of design and function. Pupils were excited by the challenging task and worked with concentration and enthusiasm. In all lessons, pupils are managed well. Good use is made of praise and encouragement and pupils' work is valued. Teachers often incorporate artwork into other curriculum areas, such as history and this makes activities relevant. The curriculum is considerably enhanced by the annual arts week in which pupils work together with visiting artists and students from the local university. This gives real purpose to tasks



and successfully stimulates pupils to give of their best.

95. The subject is very well managed by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator, who checks teachers' planning and pupils' work. She has a clear understanding of areas for future development. For example, a national scheme of work has recently been introduced and examples of pupils' work are being collected. These will support teachers' understanding in how skills should develop progressively through the school. Individual assessments of pupils' attainment are in the process of being established. The subject contributes well to pupils' cultural development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

96. Standards of work are average at the age of 7, but below average at age 11. This is a decline in standards at age 11. This is partly because the school has only recently adopted a scheme of work that systematically develops pupils' practical skills and it is not yet fully implemented. Since the previous inspection, greater emphasis has been placed on consideration of design processes and how the final products might be further improved. The quality of practical work reflects the relatively small amount of time allocated to the subject, especially in Years 3 to 6. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2, but could do better in older year groups.
97. In Years 1 and 2, pupils successfully follow design processes from the original idea to the finished product. A variety of model 4-wheeled vehicles on display in Year 2 demonstrated the translation of pupils' imaginative drawings, based on real life observations, to simple working models. Recycled materials were well used for the bodywork and axles and wheels were thoughtfully made and fitted. Pupils talk about the suitability of their designs. For example, in Year 1, they appreciated the practical difficulties of making the structures of the sails on windmills.
98. Pupils enjoy practical work and talk enthusiastically about their constructions. By Year 6 they follow instructions, make suitable choice of materials and give due thought to the suitability of the article for its intended purpose. The completed products seen during the inspection in Years 3 to 6 were mainly based on textiles. Pupils satisfactorily learnt how to join fabrics using different types of seams and to decorate the product to reflect their own individuality. Discussion with pupils revealed their interest in design and technology and their concern that there was sometimes not enough time to complete the work as well as they would like. For example, some of the soft toys were completed at home or remained unfinished. Overall, there is insufficient evidence of pupils experiencing the full range of construction skills. Those related to work with wood and mechanical movement are underdeveloped in Years 3 to 6. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational need, make similar progress.
99. Few design and technology lessons were on the timetable during the inspection period. Evidence from other sources, including discussion with pupils and teachers, indicates that teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, but less so in Years 3 to 6. This is because the pupils' work in Years 3 to 6 does not yet show sufficient progression from basic to advanced skills for each of the different age groups and teachers' expectations of standards to be achieved are sometimes too low. The teaching of the design process is satisfactory and includes some good practices, such as when pupils disassemble products to find out how they are made. The weaker element of teaching, particularly in older year groups, is in the lack of opportunity for pupils to develop good practical skills.
100. Design and technology has not been a priority in the school development plan. There has been little checking of the quality of teaching or pupils' work through which to identify weaknesses and target higher standards. There is scope for considerable improvement through the systematic development of practical skills.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

101. It was possible to observe only a small number of lessons during the inspection and judgements are supported by evidence from pupils' work and discussions with teachers and pupils. Attainment is broadly in line with national expectation by ages 7 and 11 and standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

102. At age 7, pupils have made satisfactory progress in their acquisition of geographical skills and knowledge. They learn about the local area from walks and a bus journey, locating key buildings and features, such as the swimming pool, the park and the golf course. They compare Irlam with a different environment through a trip to Southport and a study of its coastline. Pupils enjoy learning about other countries. For example, they learn about the environment and people of St. Lucia from a series of very good pictures and artefacts. They use maps and atlases and plot simple journeys in the locality and further afield. For example, they plot a journey from Irlam to Plymouth, using various forms of transport.
103. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make good progress and achieve well. At age 11 they have sound geographical knowledge. Their map skills are particularly well developed. They use atlases and maps of various scales, progressing from local street maps of Irlam to maps of Britain and the world. They locate key features such as mountain ranges, major cities and rivers and recognise different climate types. Pupils use data on climates competently to compare countries such as Italy, Kenya and Britain. They use simple land utilisation maps and traffic surveys to compare Irlam with a rural village in North Wales.
104. Lower attaining pupils and those with SEN are given appropriate tasks and good support which enables them to make the same progress as other pupils. All pupils benefit from the good use of resources and are efficient in searching for information from a variety of sources, using the Internet increasingly for this purpose. Higher attaining pupils find ample opportunities to extend their learning through this area and this is reflected in the quality of their written work.
105. In the lessons observed the quality of teaching was good, overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use resources and time well to provide for effective learning. They are imaginative in planning tasks that challenge and stimulate pupils. For example, pupils in Year 6 followed up work on the impact of a proposed residential development on a former industrial site by enacting a public meeting on the issue. They convincingly acted out a variety of roles and clearly demonstrated their ability to see both sides of a debate. Pupils respond very well to the range of quality resources used and the challenges set. They settle quickly on the set tasks, work co-operatively in their groups and maintain a good work rate. These discussions contribute much to pupils' moral and social development.
106. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. In a short time, she has made a positive impact on raising the profile of the subject. The curriculum is well planned, with a two-year cycle of topics that caters satisfactorily for the mixed-age classes. However, the way in which the timetable is organised makes it difficult to maintain a smooth progression in the learning of skills and this does not assist the further raising of standards. Resources are good and very effectively used. A good programme of visits makes a very significant contribution to pupils' learning and moral, social and cultural development. For example, they practise compass skills during orienteering in a local park, survey the river at Worsley Woods and spend a week at Lledr Hall in Year 5. Many pupils take part in weekend hikes organised by the school, which support their map reading skills.

## **HISTORY**

107. Due to timetable arrangements it was possible to observe only two lessons, both in Key Stage 2. Judgements are made on the basis of these lessons, together with supporting evidence from pupils' work and discussions with teachers and pupils. Attainment at ages 7 and 11 is in line with that expected in the National Curriculum and standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
108. In Years 1 and 2, pupils gain a basic appreciation of chronology by comparing their lives now with when they were much younger. At age 7, they accurately sequence the events in a story, such as the Gunpowder Plot. They recognise famous people of today, such as the Queen, Prime Minister and famous footballers and learn about famous people from past times such as Florence Nightingale and Louis Braille. They enjoy listening to stories about their lives and draw pictures, illustrating their contribution to their period in history. Pupils achieve satisfactorily and produce work in line with the standard expected for their age.
109. Through Years 3 to 6 pupils make good progress. At age 11, pupils have a broad view of the history

of Britain through studies of the Roman invasion, the Tudor period and the Victorian age. They demonstrate a good general knowledge of the periods. For example, they are aware of some of the reasons behind the Roman invasion, know about the Roman army, its weapons and some of its basic tactics and how towns and agriculture developed during the Roman period. They are familiar with other civilisations such as Ancient Egypt and Greece and particularly enjoy the Egyptian period, which is reflected in their written work. Pupils develop sound skills in recognising the value of historical sources, such as Pepys' diary and inscriptions on Roman lead ingots, in providing information about people and events. Visits to Manchester Museum, Chester and Ordsall Hall make a big impact on pupils' learning. Pupils use Internet sites to obtain information about topics and higher attaining pupils use these sources to very good effect in their work. Pupils often develop their researches into their topic homework. Modified tasks and worksheets enable lower attaining pupils to produce sound work and make similar progress to other pupils.

110. In the lessons observed the quality of teaching was good. The lessons were well planned and carefully structured and pupils were set interesting and challenging tasks. For example, following a visit to Chester and its museum, pupils used reference books to compare the facilities and amenities of a Roman town with a modern British town. A good quality computer program was used effectively in revising Year 3 pupils' knowledge of Egyptian funeral customs, prior to their producing their own picture story sequencing the events. Pupils show a keen interest and listen attentively, responding positively to questions. Pupils are encouraged to talk about their work and they freely express their views. Their enthusiasm and interest make a considerable contribution to their learning.
111. The curriculum is well planned on a two-year cycle of topics and based on the national scheme of work. The timetable organisation does not help the smooth and progressive development of skills and the further raising of standards. This is to some extent counter-balanced by the interspersing of visits with a historical focus, which are very effectively used to provide good learning opportunities. The subject is well led and the co-ordinator is building up a good range of quality resources for teaching.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

112. At ages 7 and 11, pupils are working at the levels expected by the National Curriculum. There have been good improvements in the provision for information and communications technology since the last inspection and these have had a significant impact on the progress that pupils make.
113. By the age of seven, pupils are familiar with the keyboard and mouse. They locate the software they need using computer menus and icons and enter their information confidently. They write reports, poetry and stories and higher attainers apply simple punctuation. For example, Year 2 pupils write character studies in literacy lessons. They enter data and present this in the form of block and bar graphs. Pupils create simple repeating patterns and pictures, using graphics programs. They print and save their work independently. They learn to control the movement of a simple programmable toy.
114. At age 11, pupils have sound word processing skills, which they use to produce interesting work. They enhance their text by changing its size, style or colour and by inserting pictures. They enter their data independently and convert them into a range of graphs and charts. Pupils learn to use spreadsheets and convert these into graphs, also. They use graphics programs to create pictures and insert pictures they take with the digital camera into their writing. As well as controlling the movement of a robotic toy and moving an object about the screen, pupils control other events through the computer. For example, they operate switches in models made, using a construction kit. Pupils use electronic equipment to measure and collect data, such as an electronic thermometer. They undertake research work, using CD-ROM and the Internet, and are keen to further this work in after-school and lunchtime computer clubs.
115. Teaching is good throughout the school and is now promoting good progress for all pupils, including those with SEN. Teachers have undertaken a programme of training to give them sound subject knowledge of the new curriculum. They use this to plan their lessons well. Pupils enjoy the activities, are enthusiastic and work together productively. Teachers encourage pupils to share what they discover and help each other learn. For example, when devising formulae to solve calculations in a spreadsheet some pupils found a shortcut by clicking on cells. They explained to other pupils what

they had done so that all could benefit from their achievement. Teachers plan effectively to use computers within the classroom in lessons in other subjects, such as literacy and numeracy. This gives pupils many good opportunities to practise the skills they and make further progress. This is not as well developed in science as it could be, although a particularly good example was seen in the Year 3 and 4 class, when pupils examined and classified soil samples. They entered their information onto a database and produced a graph of the different types of soil.

116. Pupils are familiar with the Internet and use it to gain information in many subjects, such as history and religious education. Junior pupils make good use of the computers in lunchtimes and after school clubs to locate information that will help with their topic homework. Although they have not yet used e-mail, this is planned for the next term.
117. The co-ordination of the subject is good and the co-ordinator has a clear view of how the curriculum is to develop further. She is effective in supporting other members of staff and active in organising out of lesson opportunities for pupils to use the computers. However, she has not yet had the opportunity to check the success of the good planning on pupils' achievement. The school has had additional funding for national initiatives and spending has been effective in improving facilities and teacher expertise. The school has adopted the national guidelines for teaching the subject and these are now being implemented. However, there is not yet a system of assessment that provides teachers with good information on planning the next steps for individual pupils and ensuring that all achieve as well as they could. Useful extended courses are organised for parents so that they know what their children are learning and how they can help them achieve well.

## **MUSIC**

118. At ages 7 and 11, pupils attain standards that are expected for their age and this is an improvement for those aged 11 since the previous inspection. The school employs a visiting specialist who works alongside most class teachers, increasing their subject knowledge and ensuring that pupils systematically develop their knowledge and skills. Since the previous inspection, standards of attainment have also been raised by increased opportunities for pupils to compose, perform and evaluate their own music.
119. At age 7, pupils sing a variety of songs from memory clearly and with appropriate pitch and phrasing. Evidence of taped performance indicates that they play a variety of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. They keep a steady beat as they play in time to taped music and copy the beat of simple clapping rhythms. Pupils express their feelings through listening to music and describe how they create simple compositions, using a set of symbols to illustrate the phrase of music. They are familiar with the works of major composers, such as Beethoven.
120. At age 11, the majority sing tunefully with clear diction, paying appropriate attention to tempo and dynamics. Pupils write sensitive evaluations of their feelings on listening to music, such as "Yellow Submarine" by The Beatles. They study patterns in music and know that how the beats are grouped determines the rhythm. Pupils work in groups to compose and perform rhythms, such as when Year 5 composed African music. In Year 6, pupils sing in two part rounds. In their study of harmony, they use tuned percussion instruments to investigate which notes played together produce concord or discord. The majority of pupils are familiar with the names of notes, but few use standard notation in their compositions.
121. Regular music lessons ensure that most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress through the school. However, some lessons are rather long, particularly for younger pupils and make it difficult for teachers to maintain interest throughout. The national scheme of work has recently been introduced and is providing useful guidance in the consistent development of knowledge and understanding.
122. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall, and is sometimes good. In a good lesson observed in the Year 5 and 6 class, good use was made of musical resources and the lesson was well planned to include practical experience. Pupils were well managed and their behaviour was good. They worked sensibly in pairs, taking turns to investigate note combinations and, by the end of the lesson, had made good progress. Where teaching is not as successful the pace of the lesson is slower, pupils

begin to lose interest and do not make as much progress as they could. Teachers encourage pupils to maintain good posture, ensuring correct breathing for the successful singing of phrases. Pupils are given appropriate opportunities to perform for others. For example, when Year 6 pupils sang a song they had composed to the rest of the school, their enjoyment was evident. Although there is no opportunity for pupils to learn to play other instruments through expert tuition, learning is enhanced by the provision of extra-curricular recorder and keyboard clubs, which are well supported. The curriculum is further enriched by the opportunity for pupils to observe professional musical performances, such as when pupils attend performances by the Halle orchestra.

123. The subject co-ordinator is a music specialist, who has effectively led improvement since the previous inspection. She has a clear understanding of future areas for development to improve further.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

124. At ages 7 and 11, most pupils, including those with SEN, attain standards in line with those expected nationally for their age. At age 11, pupils achieve particularly well in swimming because of their weekly swimming lessons. The good standards found in swimming at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. However, overall standards have dipped slightly because of changes to the curriculum and the temporary absence of the subject leader. Across the school, there is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls and all pupils regularly participate in movement, gymnastics, games and swimming.

125. At age 7, pupils move about the hall with appropriate control when skipping, jumping, and running, but a significant minority lack control when changing direction and bump into others. Most pupils can send and receive balls accurately and show increasing control of height and direction when sending the ball to a partner. However, when working on a sequence of linked actions, few pupils work to improve the quality of their movements. Pupils make good progress in learning to swim. Pupils in Year 1 achieve well in gymnastics. They have a good understanding of the routines required for safe working in the hall and show developing control of a range of movements involving changing speed and direction. They follow instructions well and the majority can develop exercises into a simple movement sequence.

126. At age 11, pupils have made at least satisfactory progress in each area. Progress in swimming is very good and standards are high. Pupils develop sound ball skills in throwing, catching and fielding and attain a sound standard in team games. They compete with some success against other schools. In dance, pupils develop sequences of suitable movements in response to a piece of music, producing movements that reflect changes in the music. Although they observe the performance of others, they do not regularly evaluate their own and others' work in order to improve the quality of their work. They have a clear understanding of the need to 'warm up' and 'cool down' before and after exercise.

127. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In the lessons observed, teaching ranged from unsatisfactory to very good and was particularly good in swimming. Teaching is effective where planning is thorough and lessons are tightly structured. High expectations and clear guidance successfully enable pupils to extend their skills in gymnastics and games. Pupils learn quickly where they observe techniques such as sending and retrieving a ball or they are asked to evaluate the quality of a sequence of movements before improving their own work. In these lessons, pupils are given responsibility, they work hard and the majority collaborate productively. They have positive attitudes to learning but, overall, behaviour is satisfactory. This is because a significant minority of pupils lack sufficient self-control and become noisy and boisterous when moving about a large space such as the hall. The time taken to manage these pupils' behaviour and gain their full attention slows the pace of the lesson and restricts learning. However, where teachers intervene by working with a group, use praise to reward good effort and make suggestions to build on pupils' performance, they quickly gain knowledge of the task and the quality of their work improves.

128. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Some momentum in developing the subject has been lost, due to the co-ordinator taking leave. She brings a high level of expertise, enthusiasm and drive to the subject and plans to guide teachers in using the scheme of work and to contribute to teaching across the school. The curriculum is considerably enhanced by a good range

of sporting activities including water sports, hiking, athletics, cross country running, swimming and a range of team games. Pupils achieve well in competitive events and the very good quality of instruction during swimming lessons makes a very positive impact on the standards achieved by pupils across the age range. This is a particularly strong feature.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

129. As at the time of the previous inspection, attainment at ages 7 and 11 is in line with that identified in the Salford Agreed Syllabus. Since the previous inspection, there have been good improvements in the curriculum and resources for the teaching of world faiths and this is now promoting a greater understanding of the beliefs and values of other people. Much emphasis is given to relating pupils' knowledge to their own lives and this promotes a good understanding of the underlying values of different beliefs. This is a recent initiative, which is promoting improving standards and contributes very well to pupils' personal development.
130. At age seven, pupils have satisfactory knowledge of stories from the Bible and understand that these stories have deeper meanings. They know about the events in the life of Christ and begin to understand what relevance these have to their own lives. For example, Year 2 learn about how Jesus went into the wilderness to think and how he was tempted. They consider how they also need time alone and how they are sometimes tempted to do things that they should not do. They know about major Christian festivals, such as Christmas, Harvest and Easter and about major festivals and events in other faiths. For example, they know about Buddhist festivals and Chinese New Year. Pupils recognise that there are differences between their own religious customs and those of other faiths.
131. At age 11, pupils' knowledge of Christianity is satisfactory. They have a sound knowledge of stories from the Old and New Testament. They recognise that Christianity has a spiritual significance to Christian believers, which is explained by studying the Bible. Knowledge of artefacts and symbols of the Christian church are satisfactory. By Year 6, pupils have sound knowledge of the beliefs and customs associated with a range of faiths, such as Islam, Sikhism and Buddhism. They handle artefacts from these religions with respect and learn about the symbols associated with each of the faiths they study. They understand how religious beliefs affect the way that people live and discuss their own values confidently.
132. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have sound subject knowledge of Christianity and other world faiths. Lessons are well planned, relevant and interesting and promote good attitudes to learning. Pupils listen attentively when new work is explained and respond readily when the teacher questions them. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Progress in understanding is often good in lessons because of the way in which teachers relate the knowledge that is taught to pupils' own lives. Pupils respond well in class discussions and explain what they have learned. They are tolerant of the opinions of others and are eager to learn about the differences in religious practice and belief. Pupils work well together when they are required to share materials or to join in role-play.
133. The subject co-ordinator has been effective in improving the curriculum. A new scheme of work places a firm emphasis on relating what is learned to pupils' own lives and this promotes interest and understanding very well. She has not yet evaluated the success of its implementation by checking the standards achieved. There are some visits to local churches and local clergy are involved in supporting learning about Christianity. Religious education makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils through the study of faiths and moral issues. Collective worship sometimes includes faith stories and celebrates significant festivals, which makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' religious education.